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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 ANKARA 000627

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: S/I SATTERFIELD CONSULTS GOT ON  
IRAQ/PKK

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

**¶1. (C) SUMMARY:** In discussions with MFA U/S Apakan, MFA Deputy U/S Sinirlioglu, GOT Iraq Coordinator Ozcelik, Presidency foreign affairs advisor Turkoglu, and D/CHOD Gen. Saygun March 31, S/I Satterfield warned of the political situation in which Iraq PM Maliki finds himself as a result of the security operation he is leading against Sadrists criminal elements in Basra. Noting that all Iraqi political figures are preoccupied with the possible consequences, Satterfield urged GOT officials to consider carefully the impact on Iraqi stability of Turkey's future security decisions. He underscored the importance of Turkish engagement with GOI and Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) officials, and suggested that a new U.S.-Turkey-Iraq trilateral process, if well-prepared, could be helpful. Satterfield also described the goals of U.S.-Iraq negotiations on Strategic Framework and Status of Forces Agreements. Turkish officials expressed understanding of PM Maliki's current position and appreciation for the threat to long-term stability in Iraq. Gen. Saygun emphasized that Turkey's military actions in recent days have been aimed at specific PKK armed groups found close to the border and moving north. Overall, Turkey's actions will remain focused solely on terrorist targets and of limited scope. GOT officials touched on the importance they attach to Iraq's hydrocarbons legislation and their commitment to work closely with the UN in its efforts to establish a process through which consensus can be reached on final determination of Iraq's internal boundaries. They also expressed appreciation for continued USG understanding and support for Turkey's limited security operations against the PKK.

**¶2. (C) SUMMARY, cont'd.:** GOT officials briefed on the March 30 Arab League Summit in Damascus which they had attended as observers, saying the discussions had focused primarily on Lebanon. Though recognizing continued negative Syrian behavior in Lebanon, Turkish officials continue to believe engagement is the best approach to dissuade the SARG from its current policy course and to detach Syria from Iran's continued influence. END SUMMARY

¶ 13. (C) S/I Satterfield described to GOT officials the sensitive political situation in Iraq following PM Maliki's decision to lead an operation to root out Jaysh-al-Mahdi (JAM) special groups in Basra. With Maliki hunkered down in Basra, President Talabani has remained in Sulaymaniyah where he has been meeting with representatives of Iraq's various political factions. Iraq's entire political structure is carefully watching the results of Maliki's Basra operation and Iraqi political forces are preoccupied with assessing their next moves. This uncertain political environment could threaten the progress to date in Iraq on political reconciliation, passage of key legislation, and negotiations on U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework and Status of Forces Agreement(s). Noting the importance of Maliki not emerging from Basra politically weakened, Satterfield asked all of his GOT interlocutors to consider carefully Iraq's fragile political situation as they contemplate how to respond to the continued threat PKK terrorists pose in northern Iraq. He expressed understanding for Turkey's legitimate security concerns but emphasized that how Turkey acts toward and communicates with the GOI will play a critical role in managing tensions at a very sensitive time.

¶ 14. (C) Satterfield praised newly appointed GOT Iraq Coordinator Ozcelik's just completed two-week orientation visit to Iraq and encouraged him and other GOT officials to ramp up Turkey's engagement and communication with Iraq. He urged establishing a new U.S.-TU-IZ trilateral dialogue

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process could be useful in facilitating continued improvement in Turkish-Iraqi bilateral relations and helping ensure continued cooperation and progress in combating the PKK. However, Satterfield said reviving the trilateral mechanism would require all three sides to agree on a common well-thought out agenda and realizable goals. He suggested all three governments consider how to use existing vehicles (e.g., Turkey-Iraq Counter Terrorism Agreement) to make continued progress both in the fight against PKK terror and on broader Turkey-Iraq bilateral relations, and asked that GOT officials consider how a special envoy appointed by the USG might best advance such an effort.

¶ 15. (C) Pointing to upcoming opportunities to engage on a multilateral basis on Iraq, Satterfield said the USG has in mind two primary goals for the April 22 Expanded Neighbors Ministerial in Kuwait:

-- the GOI describes the progress it has made on the economic, political, and security fronts over the past six months to demonstrate that the overall picture in Iraq continues to improve, and that the PM's challenge to criminal and rogue JAM elements associated with Iran in Basra shows he is committed to a "national" Iraqi agenda, and

-- Iraqi officials challenge their neighbors to ramp up their economic and political engagement in Iraq, with particular focus on GCC members.

Satterfield urged GOT officials to use the March 31-April 4 visit of the Kuwaiti Emir to Turkey to press the Kuwaitis to follow Turkey's lead in establishing more direct positive contact with the GOI and a diplomatic presence in that country.

¶ 16. (C) Responding to GOT interest in the Strategic Framework and Status of Forces Agreements, Satterfield indicated they are necessary to normalize the presence of Coalition forces in Iraq following expiration of the UNSC Chapter 7 mandate in December. The SOFA would include three annexes laying out authorities for future combat and detainee operations, as well as DOD contractor immunities. The SOFA does not mandate

force levels or tie the hands of current or future U.S. administrations on that issue. Discussions with the Iraqis have already taken place at the technical level and we expect more complicated talks at the political level. The Strategic Framework is a broader, overarching agreement describing the U.S.-Iraqi partnership not only in the security arena, but in political, economic, development, and social areas as well. The Strategic Framework will be negotiated at the political level, by deputies assigned by Iraq's 5-person Executive Committee (3-member Presidency Council, PM Maliki, and KRG President Barzani) and is subject to parliamentary approval. Satterfield stressed the USG view that negotiations on both agreements must be completed by the end of June and offered to continue to brief GOT officials as those talks progress.

MFA U/S Apakan: Turkey Working Toward Establishing a Stable Iraq

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¶7. (C) MFA Under Secretary Ertugrul Apakan called Turkey "a natural partner" for Iraq, as well as for the United States and said the GOT is working to build broad cooperation between Turkey and Iraq in all areas from mil-mil cooperation to deeper economic ties and political and cultural engagement. He pointed to the importance given by the GOT to passage in Iraq of hydrocarbons legislation that establishes a national framework in which international investors in Iraq's petroleum sector can feel confident. Iraq's central government must extend its control over its national resources. Satterfield said hydrocarbons legislation is one of the USG's two highest domestic priorities for Iraq (the

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other being local elections). He noted there remains a fundamental ideological debate in Iraq between those who adhere to a market approach and those within the Oil Ministry and elsewhere who continue to support an outmoded statist model. Satterfield urged the Turks to engage with KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani on this issue when they initiate contact with him, noting he will be a key player on the KRG's approach on development of its oil and natural gas resources.

¶8. (C) Apakan said the GOT is encouraged by the approach of UNSRSG di Mistura to establish a process through which consensus might be reached on resolving Iraq's internal border disputes. The Turks look forward to cooperating with him as he continues his efforts. On urging engagement by the Kuwaitis and other Gulf states in Iraq, Apakan noted they remain extremely cautious but Turkey will urge them to engage. He said they have told the Kuwaitis Turkey is interested in stability in Iraq and the broader Gulf region and looks to cooperate with the region in helping to establish that stability. The Kuwaitis, according to GOT officials, share the desire for greater Turkish involvement in Iraq and the Gulf and have said Turkey plays a critical and indispensable role in regional security.

¶9. (C) Apakan expressed continued GOT appreciation for USG understanding and support for Turkey's limited military operations against terrorist PKK targets in northern Iraq. The GOT recognizes the need to consult with Iraq on these operations as well. He looks forward to continuing to consult closely with the USG on Iraq and pointed to his plans to visit Washington the week of April 14 and then Baghdad in late April/early May as near-term opportunities to continue our coordination. Satterfield urged Apakan to meet with Doug Lute at the NSC during his visit to Washington to discuss the hydrocarbons issue.

GOT Iraq Coordinator Ozcelik: A New Approach on Iraq

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¶10. (C) Newly appointed GOT Iraq Coordinator Murat Ozcelik briefed on his just completed two-week orientation visit to Baghdad. He said the numerous Iraqi officials with whom he had met were all very positive about increased GOT direct

engagement in Iraq and gave him a much better picture of how Turkey should ramp up engagement. He indicated he plans to return to Iraq often, spending at least one week per month there. Ozcelik reiterated Turkish interest in working closely with the USG on developing Iraq's petroleum/gas sector. He also noted the GOT's intent to ratchet up its economic and investment relationship with Iraq, pointing to a visit by State Minister for Foreign Trade Tuzmen planned for early May. Turkish embassy officials may look to consult with Embassy Baghdad on security arrangements for that visit.

¶11. (S) Ozcelik said he had hoped to meet with KRG PM Nechirvan Barzani in Baghdad during his visit but had not been able to do so. He is ready to return to Baghdad whenever Nechirvan goes. Ozcelik admitted it will be some time yet before GOT officials can refer to the KRG as anything other than the "authorities in the North" but he is committed to working assiduously to build the relationship, beginning with Nechirvan. Once contact is established, Ozcelik said he is confident the GOT and KRG can establish a joint approach to combating the PKK. Then, the GOT will be able to move more confidently on domestic efforts to address the Kurdish issue, supporting changes to Article 221 of the Turkish Penal Code to make that existing repentance law more attractive to PKK fighters who wish to abandon the fight and return to society.

DU/S Sinirlioglu: We'll Defend Ourselves Against PKK;  
Continue Engagement with Syria

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¶12. (C) MFA Deputy Under Secretary for Middle East Affairs Feridun Sinirlioglu accepted the need for Turkey to proceed with caution so that Turkish counter terrorist operations against the PKK in northern Iraq do not further destabilize Iraq or weaken PM Maliki's government. However, he made clear that Turkey cannot sit back and accept attacks by the PKK emanating from Iraqi territory without defending itself. He and Ozcelik discussed engaging the GOI to complete the Turkey-Iraq Counter Terrorism Agreement and the possibility of seeking resolution to the disputed Article 4 on the concept of hot pursuit by Turkish forces into Iraqi territory through bilateral mil-mil cooperation. Sinirlioglu expressed interest in Iran's views toward PM Maliki and asked whether the U.S. and Iran have continued talks on Iraq-related security issues. Satterfield noted the Iranians have recently expressed interest in resuming those contacts but it will not occur before late April. Sinirlioglu conveyed concerns expressed by some within the GOT over recent increased numbers of Mujahideen el-Khalq (MEK)-linked refugees coming from Iraq into Turkey and requesting asylum. He believes they have been departing from Camp Ashraf and making their way through northern Iraq into Turkey. Satterfield said many former MEK members are at Ashraf and most of them could probably return safely to Iran.

¶13. (C) Sinirlioglu, who accompanied U/S Apakan as the GOT representatives to the March 30 Arab League Summit in Damascus, said the discussion focused principally on the situation in Lebanon. He noted the Saudi-led boycott had not led to the outcome the Saudis were seeking, as only the Saudis, Egyptians, Lebanese, and Bahrainis did not participate. The GOT continues to believe there is an opportunity to split Syria from Iran and intends to carry forth with its policy of engagement with the SARG. Satterfield noted the Syrians have isolated themselves from mainstream Arab thinking and reiterated the USG position that proceeding with the Arab League Summit in Damascus as the SARG is blocking Lebanon's presidential election was precisely the wrong message. He noted that Bashar Asad has foregone many chances to demonstrate his willingness to be a constructive force in the region. His direct intervention to block the presidential election in Lebanon and unhelpful behavior in Iraq continue, and his relations with Iran are

unchanged. Asad is confident and believes he has withstood efforts by the U.S. and the broader international community to isolate him. The Syrians are patient and will wait as long as they must to gain the situation they seek in Lebanon so as to reassert Syrian control there. Sinirlioglu agreed that Turkey, too, is not happy with the situation in Lebanon and will continue to urge positive action by the Syrians there. On reopening the Israel-Syria track of the MEPP, Sinirlioglu said the Syrians appear to have moved into waiting mode in hopes that a new administration in Washington will be more amenable to SARG positions. He said that is not Turkey's reading of the situation and that Turkish officials have told the Syrians such an approach will only waste another two years.

¶14. (C) In a separate meeting, Presidency foreign affairs advisor Amb. Gurcan Turkoglu, a former Turkish ambassador to Iran, underscored Turkish concern about Iranian influence in Iraq and throughout the region. He noted the visiting Kuwaitis expressed a great deal of concern about Iranian intentions as well. Turkoglu said high oil prices are making it easy for the regime and the Ahmadinejad faction right now.

He accepted Satterfield's point that the Gulf countries must step up their engagement in Iraq. He said he would ask President Gul to raise it with the Kuwaiti Emir later in the week in Istanbul as well as with the GCC Secretary General during a visit planned for April 9. Turkoglu added Gul is planning a trip to the UAE, Qatar, and either Bahrain or Oman in the coming month or so, another opportunity to make the

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point.

D/CHOD Saygun: Operations Against the PKK to Continue, Mil-Mil Engagement With Iraq to Increase

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¶15. (C) Deputy Chief of Staff General Ergin Saygun thanked Satterfield for his frank and helpful assessment of the situation in Basra and its significance for Turkey, but noted that Turkish operations against PKK targets will continue in close coordination with the U.S. He described recent Turkish action against the PKK in northern Iraq as limited and directed only at the PKK. Recent action has focused on massed groups of PKK fighters close to the border and heading north. Saygun said the Turkish military would like very much to have a dialogue with Massoud Barzani, but will not unless his people stop cooperating with the PKK. If Barzani can do this, everything would be possible. Saygun was skeptical of the utility of Vice President Cheney's recent visit to Barzani on his home turf. He asked about press reports that Satterfield, along with Gen. Odierno and ADM Fallon, had recently suggested Turkey talk with the PKK. Satterfield categorically rejected those reports. "The PKK is a terrorist organization, period," he assured Saygun, while stating that the U.S. supports political, economic and social measures to deal with Kurdish issues, including measures aimed at bringing PKK sympathizers back into the Turkish polity.

¶16. (C) Saygun described Turkey-Iraq bilateral military contacts and said he expected an Iraqi military delegation led by Iraqi DCHOD Abadi on April 21. He said Abadi had communicated specific military cooperation goals and opined that some of them could be addressed via NTM-I, while others would require political approval. Satterfield said he hoped Turkey-Iraq military cooperation could be institutionalized in a committee which could meet more frequently and which Turkey could use to give Iraqi authorities a clearer picture of Turkish security needs and expectations. Saygun agreed with Satterfield that one area for dialogue could be completion of the Turkey-Iraq Counter-Terrorism Agreement, especially Article 4. Saygun cautioned that Turkey is still unwilling to share operational information with Iraqi authorities for fear it will leak to the PKK. Satterfield suggested that General Petraeus may have advice on how to

handle that issue. Saygun used the opportunity to press his proposal that a Turkish military liaison officer (LNO) be assigned to MNF-I HQ to ensure good and timely communication.

¶17. (C) Satterfield suggested reviving the U.S.-Turkey-Iraq trilateral mechanism, with a carefully crafted agenda and realizable goals. Saygun stressed that success will depend on whether Barzani decides to cooperate with Turkey and the U.S., or with the PKK. If Iraqi Kurds demonstrate they are on Turkey's side, Turkey would feel more confident in its ability to accept the political risks a trilateral process would entail. In any case, Saygun stated, Massoud Barzani must not be included in trilateral talks. Saygun express interest in negotiations over U.S.-Iraq security relations, saying he is looking for ideas for crafting similar Turkey-Iraq agreements. Satterfield offered to brief Saygun again as the process of negotiations over the Strategic Framework and SOFA unfolds in the coming weeks.

¶18. (U) S/I Satterfield has cleared this message.

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